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ABSTRACT

A general look at rural and/or small schools is the focus of this state of the art review. The historical perspective of the report begins in 1918, when the trend toward consolidation of one-room schools was first indicated and continues into and well beyond the depression. It is reported that the number of school districts decreased from 127,000 in 1932 to 16,276 in 1976. But Sher and Tompkins (1976) postulate that school consolidation has had its strengths exaggerated, weaknesses ignored, and overall merits for educational reform seriously oversold. Sher and Tompkins also report that not a single 1 of 14 recent consolidation studies controlling for IQ and socioeconomic effects records a consistent, positive correlation between size of school and academic achievement. Trends indicating support of goals fo the 1970's are discussed and goals for the 1980's are listed. Strengths and weaknesses of small schools are then discussed from the following viewpoints of administration, teacher, student, community, guidance, atmosphere, finance, curriculum, student achievement, staffing, morale, and cultural opportunity. Concluding the paper is a lengthy review of promising practices. A chart contrasts the characteristics of the Model Innovative Process, as identified by Fullan in 1972, with characteristics of the Rural Futures Development Process, developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. (AN)

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A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON RURAL AND/OR SMALL SCHOOLS

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This review of professional literature has as its focus a general look at rural and/or small schools. It does not attempt an exhaustive, in-depth review of a given topic, such as finance, but rather presents a state of the art summary. The broad areas covered include an historical context, the reported strengths and weaknesses of small schools, and a review of promising practices for improving these schools.

Historical Perspective

1918-1944 The community school concept has deep roots in American history. Initially, every community (no matter how vague the boundaries) established a one-room school to educate its children and to frequently serve as a social center. However, as early as 1918, the United States Office of Education (1930) was already reporting a trend toward consolidation of these one-room schools.

During the depression era preoccupation with economic survival, and impoverished conditions generally, resulted in a neglect of education, especially in rural areas. Writers such as Steinbeck, in portraying this poverty, created a negative impression of rural people as typically uneducated. Terms such as "hick" and "country bumpkin" were used to describe them. The decline in rural population increased the neglect of rural supporting institutions, such as schools, a trend which continued into the years of World War II.

1944-1959 The period following World War II saw a reawakening of concern for the complex problems facing rural America. Reflecting this concern, the first White House Conference on Rural Education (1944) spelled out the rights of rural children through adoption of A Charter for Education for Rural Children. Subsequent conferences in 1954 and 1962 again validated these rights. In addition, the National Education Association formed a special Department of Rural Education to focus on all aspects of schooling in small communities and published many books and articles related to these topics.

By the late fifties, the research and publications of Conant (1959)

began to make a great impact. He identified 17,000 of the then 21,000 American high schools as too small to be effective, the implication being that large or medium size schools constitute the desired norm. The move to consolidate was renewed with vigor.

1960's Small schools lived through an uncomfortable period during the decade following Conant's work. The trend toward comprehensive high schools as an attempt to provide better services and reduce costs stimulated the development of some model projects for rural education. O'Fallon (1974) summarized these projects. He recognized the combining of teaching staffs from several schools for the purpose of curriculum development as common to all their operational procedures. The following list represented the projects cited:

1. The Catskill Area Project in Small School Design had two prime objectives:
   a. The development of actual practices which are immediately useful to the improvement of education.
   b. The development of fundamental concepts essential to basic changes in the internal organization of small schools.
2. The Western States Small Schools Project serving five states (Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah) had three goals:
   a. Broader and higher quality academic and vocational curricula.
   b. Changed organization for instruction.
   c. Improvement of teaching and administration through inservice education.
3. The Texas Small School Project had several areas of focus:
   a. Inservice for teachers
   b. Curriculum guide development

c. Forum meetings

d. Opportunities for contact with consultants and personnel from other public schools, college professors, and other resource people

e. Meetings for demonstrations of new instructional materials.

4. The West Virginia Special Needs Project offered extension activities for the purpose of learning more about how to work effectively with low income, rural, non-farm groups.

5. An EPDA Project carried out in rural Southern Indiana was basically concerned with improving teacher effectiveness through a training-outside consultant model.

Stutz (1974) reported on the results of the concentrated effort of the sixties to improve rural education. The project officers for many of the above models and other involved persons convened in 1971 in Portland, Oregon, to assess the results. The original projects had focused on inservice teacher and administrator training, shared services, demonstration teaching and consultant services. Incentives such as money, publicity, and accreditation were used to encourage participation. The conclusion of this panel was stated as follows:

> Within the original conceptions, these strategies again and again were achieved. However, such achievement demonstrated the inadequacies of the original conception by being piecemeal and temporary, often involving only one teacher in a single innovative practice, affecting few students and seldom lasting beyond the tenure of the teacher or administrator directly involved in the innovation. The introduction of extensive innovations in many schools did result in several teachers changing classroom management and instructional procedures, but even after several years, these changes had not been attempted by colleagues.

> These conclusions were derived from direct observations at schools which were targets for change. Most observers were startled and depressed at how little the change strategies had affected what actually went on in the classroom. A remarkable degree of similarity existed between the classrooms in "innovative" rural schools and those in most other rural schools. The objectives seemed untouched; the student tasks varied little from the usual passive and verbal learning pattern; and the pupil teacher relationship remained primarily unaltered from the traditional pattern in which the teacher functions as the purveyor of truth in virtually all legitimate classroom transactions.

Stutz in this same paper also cited Goodlad and Lenin (1970) in a study undertaken to determine the extent educational reform was finding its way into the classroom. They found verbal support for innovations from administrators and teachers, but little or no evidence of them in the classroom.

O'Fallon (1974) credited the various projects with one outcome having broad implications for small schools. This was the movement toward regional sharing of services and programs. Much work was left to be accomplished toward improved equality and quantity of learning opportunities for rural students. What then is our situation in the seventies?

1970's After nine decades of outward migration from rural to urban areas, the situation has reversed itself. Urban America is beset with problems including crime, environmental pollution, crowding, unemployment, and a multitude of social problems (e.g. divorce, alienation, drugs, etc.). The consequence of these is that many people are returning to the rural setting, exemplified through increased recreational use of rural areas, either through camping, picnicking, hiking, boating, or building summer recreational homes. Others, who have postponed the dream of a more simplified old-fashioned life, are permanently resettling in the country. Industry, too, is

being attracted to less populated areas by tax incentives, available land, and a less organized work force.

The trend is being further amplified by personal beliefs, as expressed by authors such as Schumacher, who in Small is Beautiful (1973) expresses the theory of appropriate technology. Concurrent with the trend is the growing awareness of the limits of our natural resources. Rising inflation is forcing people to rethink their values. In short, the return to more old-fashioned values generally associated with rural life is now a national phenomenon.

The developments of the 1970's have caused change and confusion among rural youth in America. In the recent past, there has been a decrease in the labor requirements of the farm due to mechanization, forcing a migration of rural youth, who are products of small schools, to an urban or suburban area. Their problems in competing for urban jobs are accentuated by their severely limited educational preparation. However, due to the trends discussed earlier, more and more rural high school graduates are staying home to work. This diversity creates a more pronounced need for small high schools having relevant and realistic programs for both those who will remain and those who will migrate.

Traditionally, consolidation has been considered the best way to make small schools more productive. Tamblyn (1977) reports a drastic reduction in the number of school districts, from 127,000 in 1932 to 16,376 in 1974. The National Center for Educational Statistics (1977) reports a continuing decrease to 16,276 districts in the fall of 1976. Sher and Tompkins (1976) found that this policy of rural consolidation

has had its strengths exaggerated, its weaknesses ignored, and its overall merits for educational reform seriously oversold. Despite massive investments, consolidation has not alleviated the education problems characteristic to rural areas. Sher and Tompkins also report that not a single study among 14 recent consolidation studies controlling for IQ and socioeconomic effects records a consistant, positive correlation between size and achievement. They also point out that there is no strong evidence that consolidation is necessarily beneficial to either the taxpayer or the administrator. If consolidation is not the answer, what else can be done?

Tamblyn (1971) published a list of recommendations for the 1970's related to some of the major problems facing rural America. These recommendations focus around a strong national commitment and include:

a. problems facing the urban U. S. can't be resolved alone;

b. rural America exists;

c. rural America has serious problems;

d. problems can and must be solved;

e. rural and urban problems must be attacked jointly; and

f. this joint attack is a national responsibility

Evidence of support for these recommendations is found in the following trends:

1. renewed interest and concern over the plight of rural education in general;

2. federal commitment in recognition of the fact that rural America exists, that rural society has problems, and that the Federal Government must play a major role in providing solutions;

3. commitment of the National Institute of Education to the Rural

Experimental Schools program, which emphasized locally-initiated comprehensive educational change dependent on community participation, with provision for systematic documentation and evaluation;

4. the continued funding of the Educational Resources Information Center/Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (ERIC/CRESS);
5. emergence of regional education service agencies (Educational Corporations) designed to serve rural and small schools;
6. linkage between the Appalachian Regional Lab and local school districts in moving from the development stage to actual program implementation;
7. reemergence of the "community school" concept;
8. the myriad of agencies and organizations at the local, state, and rational levels concerned with rural problems and education;
9. the movement by teachers and teacher organizations to improve the quality of rural education; and
10. conferences which provide impetus for rural community improvement through the schools (Tamblyn, 1975).

Despite the renewal of energy, effort, and funding, Tamblyn (1977) reports that the problems related to rural, small schools are still with us.

Three major tasks of the 1980's for those concerned with rural issues are:

1. basic research on small school problems, practices, and unique features;
2. curriculum and program development which builds on these features and makes use of children's rural life experiences; and

3. elaboration and implementation of models for funding and regulating small schools (Dunne, 1978).

In relation to these tasks, some of the most comprehensive developments or models of the 1970's will be discussed later.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Most of the arguments related to small schools give considerable attention to the alleged strengths and/or weaknesses of their educational programs and the opportunities available to students. Much of the literature on small schools is devoted to this topic, and no review of this type would be complete without a summary of the information and allegations which have been made. An excellent summary of alleged strengths and weaknesses of small schools is available in a 1974 publication by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. A portion of that report follows to provide a review of the literature on the subject, as it seems unlikely that an additional attempt would result in a significantly better or more current summarization.

> The starting point for the renaissance of the small school must be the determination of its inherent strengths and the identification of its structural weaknesses. Then steps can be taken to build program and procedures on those strengths, while at the same time devising expedients to reduce if not eliminate the weaknesses. Hitherto, the primary problem seems to have been that small schools chose to mirror their larger counterparts rather than to recognize their own unique advantages then structure their education programs to take full benefit of those strengths.
>
> It should be recognized that many of the strengths of small schools can prove to be deterrents to effective education unless they are capitalized upon creatively. Small class size means little if the teacher persists in lecturing to the class as though standing before an audience of hundreds. Potential flexibility of scheduling for all students has no value if the school continues on a rigid six by five schedule for all students. The exigent need is not only to recognize

the values and retardants of smallness but to take steps to modify the program so as to realize the strengths and repress the weaknesses. As is well expressed in the Working Paper for the Small Schools Conference at the University of Northern Iowa:

> "An examination of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the small school is the first step in solving the problem. It offers this census with no great assurance that it has exhausted the subject, but it does have sturdy confidence in the fact that the strengths and weaknesses it has delineated are indeed realities in the field."

The Purported Strengths of Small Schools

1. Close working relationships subsist between the faculty and the administration. These relationships are frequently more personal than role-expectative.

2. Bureaucratic overload--red tape, intricate regulations is not so prevalent in small schools as in large.

3. Decisions in the small school can be made more on an individual basis than on a collective basis. This relates both to staff and students.

4. There is a greater sense of community felt by everyone in the school. Smallness by its very nature ordains involvement.

5. Intimate, vis-a-vis relationships are possible between teachers and students in the classroom and in the more informal settings in the school.

6. There generally are more favorable student/teacher ratios in small schools than larger ones.

7. There is a greater possibility of a small school's becoming in fact and in operation, learner-centered, with all this means for a positive affective climate and the ultimate burgeoning of the individual.

8. The potentiality for effective individualization of instruction and for broad independent study programs is great.

9. Since numbers alone preclude ability grouping at any one grade level, this averts many of the deleterious effectives of that common practice. Moreover, the possibility of grade-crossing and age-crossing in classrooms grows significantly as the size of the school diminishes.

10. A small school presents a student with a greater opportunity to discover his identity, to learn about himself.

11. A small school provides greater opportunity for each student to participate in the total school activity program. Each student is needed in the program; hence the activity program becomes a learning activity, rather than merely a stage for the stellar performances of a few.

12. The inescapable importance of the single individual in all phases of the program is to be noted. Every study is needed; each teacher plays a vital role.

13. Guidance becomes a staff-wide function in reality, rather than a service provided only by specialists. This total staff involvement in guidance, inevitable in a school setting in which everyone is known to everyone else, makes for truly effective guidance at the point of need.

14. Means and measures to insure proper discipline are not so demanding and obtrusive as they are in larger schools. In consequence, more staff effort can be devoted to the teaching process.

15. Teachers are constrained by the logistics of small schools to be more generalist than specialist, thus providing that breadth of educational and human contacts so desired in our schools and so infrequently achieved.

16. Smallness in a school fosters closer relationships among teachers, resulting in a more unified staff approach to such problems as articulation, program change, the determination of the fundamental purposes of the school, and so forth.

17. Change can be affected with greater ease in a small school, once the desire and the determination have asserted themselves. Designs for innovation do not need to be so complex as those required in the more mammoth schools.

18. The non-grading of a small high school, placing every student on his own individual progress plan, attains an immediate feasibility that is not present in a larger school.

19. Small schools can--indeed frequently must--cross-grade students in classes. This results in a more stimulating age mix than is to be found in the average classroom in larger schools, where the number of peer models is stringently limited. Thus a multiple-age classroom is more than an expedient; it is an educational desideratum.

20. The school schedule can be altered more readily in a small school to permit field trips, school-wide assemblies, work-study programs, and so forth.

21. Close working relationships normally subsist between the small school and its community. Hence the staff of the school can establish an authentic identification with the community, cultivating mutual respect and understanding.

22. Teachers in small schools get to know parents better, thus providing more effective cooperation in the resolution of whatever problems might arise.

23. In small schools, a larger percentage of the parents become involved in school affairs than in larger ones. This parental involvement leads not only to better community support but also enhances the total educational program.

24. The small school, if properly directed, can become the community school, serving the needs of its students and satisfying the wide panoply of educational demands and desires of the community at large.

The caveat needs to be sounded again that those strengths are merely potentials until a dedicated staff and an enlightened administration combine to turn them into realities. If a small school ignores these strengths in developing its program and processes, then it will languish in its smallness.

The Purported Problems Smallness Brings in Its Wake

To resort once more to the Working Papers for the Small Schools Conference at the University of Iowa:

> "The size of a school is not necessarily the determining factor for quality. There are good large schools and good small schools. The reverse is also true. The quality of the educational program is usually determined by how well a school capitalizes on its strengths and how well it overcomes its weaknesses. . . . The small school also has potential strengths and weaknesses, but the strengths will not be realized and the weaknesses will not be overcome unless programs are planned to analyze the potential strengths and weaknesses and steps are then taken to improve the quality of student experiences in school."

There clearly are some disadvantages connected with smallness in a school. While weaknesses can be palliated in some circumstances, and even eliminated, this can be achieved only by a conscious effort on the part of the professional staff. The major disabilities that can afflict small schools seem to be:

1. A quality small school program requires a relatively high per student expenditure. Small schools are not inherently efficient--that is they do not educate the largest number of students for the smallest amount of money. However, they may be far more effective than large schools in realizing the human and ultimate purposes of education. It should be noted also that the additional costs required by a good small school program are not exhorbitant and that in some cases they can be less than those needed for the gargantuan school.

2. The small school's enrollment makes it difficult to offer a broad and variegated curriculum. But this is only true if orthodox scheduling and programming patterns are followed. The challenge here is to devise new and better ways of bringing broader educational offerings to students in small schools.

3. There is a paucity in the small school of varying and contrasting psychological environments for its students. The student body in a small school normally is more homogeneous in ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural background than would be true of the students in a larger school. The need, then, is to provide experiences in cultural diversity within the school's program, since they cannot be experienced on a day-to-day basis.

4. Limited alternatives are open to a student and teacher when they become embroiled in conflict or antagonism. A student generally cannot be moved to another section of the same course, since many courses are offered on a one section only basis.

5. There is a tendency for small schools to seek to mirror-image larger schools in program, practices, procedures, and outcomes. Frequently this leads to an inappropriate, inferior program.

6. Limited supportive services--health services, psychological services, counseling services--are available to students in small schools.

7. Difficulties frequently are experienced by students transferring into a small school from a larger one because of the narrower band of course offerings in the small school. However, educational ingenuity should make it possible to provide a meaningful, sequential program for every student by devising sound expedients and alternatives.

8. Small schools experience difficulty in providing programs other than those that are strictly academic. The need for vocational/occupational education is a pressing one in most small schools, but limited funds make it impossible to provide suitable programs. However, work-study and cooperative work programs can be mounted in the communities of small schools as well as in the more bustling urban environments, and this offers a sound approach to meaningful vocational education.

9. Small schools sometimes feel they cannot offer work at advanced and specialized levels within the academic program. But again, there are some proved and sound educational measures by which this problem can be overcome.

10. Students with exceptional learning problems frequently are not adequately or appropriately cared for in small schools, since the provision of special education is most expensive when the numbers to be treated are small. But here again the school can resolve this problem by the use of consortia, shared programs, use of community volunteers, and similar efforts.

11. The prevailing emphasis on the values and virtues of size in the American ethos at times makes it difficult to sustain morale in a small school. It is difficult for teachers and students in small schools not to develop some kind of inferiority--perhaps even a defeatist--attitude unless they are unusually perceptive and can read the emerging trends in our turbulent society.

12. While generalist teachers on the staff represent a strength, there is an obverse side to this matter. These teachers have to function in more areas than their peers in larger schools; this sometimes results in inappropriate assignments, with teachers working outside their fields of strength.

13. The circumscription of the variety of strengths to be found in the staff is rather marked in some small schools. Since the number of staff members is small, not all the requisite competencies--academic, psychological, avocational--may be found on the staff.

14. Resulting from the limited number of sections in any one course or grade level, teachers in small schools in general must be assigned multiple preparations, sometimes as many as four or five different offerings.

15. Teachers are frequently isolated from their colleagues in their respective fields, making exchange of professional ideas within a field rather difficult. On the other hand, this compels the teacher to dialogue with peers in other areas, thus broadening the general ambit of educational concern within the school as a whole.

16. If the school is geographically isolated, as well as small, there is a clear and present danger of cultural impoverishment. Persistent efforts need to be made by both the school and the community to overcome this nagging deficiency.

17. The small school may have some stubborn difficulties in staff recruitment and maintenance, even in this era of a surplusage of teachers. The multiple preparations, the housing situation in the community, the generally smaller salaries, and similar factors make recruitment a continuing and genuine concern in small schools.

18. The community may exert an overbearing influence on the small school, since it is so central to the life of the people as a whole. To some extent the educational leadership of the school administrator may be more directly challenged by the lay public than would be true in a larger school. The community may completely impose its mores on the school program, even when they are inappropriate for young people preparing to live in contemporary America.

However, when the school transforms itself into a truly community school, some of these intractable problems vanish, since the "we/they" distinction blends into an "our" situation.

These constraints placed upon the small school may seem almost inseparable at first blush, but in reality practically all of them can be moderated and in mose cases obviated by creative educational thinking and sound planning on the part of the professional staff. The basic need is to establish the school patterns appropriate to small schools, rather than replicating the processes and procedures of larger schools. In this way not only will the small school prove to be effective--and perhaps even "efficient" but it also will find and cherish its own identity.

Other lists and discussion of strengths and weaknesses contain many duplications (Clements, 1970). Strengths and weaknesses are also dependent on perspective. For example, results of one study may provide a list of strengths that are considered weaknesses in another study. (Rideout (1977) discusses some of the alleged strengths and weaknesses, grouped into general areas of concern more specific to secondary schools.

> ". . .there exist definite strengths in small secondary schools. These strengths can be outlined under six major headings: administration, the teacher, the student, guidance, the community, and atmosphere. These categories are for the convenience of discussion only as it can be readily seen that there is overlap among the groupings."

Administration

An often-stated strength of small schools is that one does not find the same degree of bureaucracy and "red tape" as in large institutions (Cohen 1970; Roberts 1971; Schoenholtz 1972; Hickcox and Burnston 1973). Schools with large numbers of students and teachers require a hierarchy, formal rules, and modes of communication. Familiar to many are schools that have several vice-principals, as well as major and assistant department heads, with teachers, to say nothing of students, far removed from the top administrator. In the small high school, the administrator's job is not as onerous and therefore fewer people are needed and the individual has more time for personal contact with staff and students. It is not unusual for a principal in such a school to know the names of most pupils and to chat with them in the halls as well as to spend some lunch hours or coffee breaks with the teachers.

The de-emphasis on bureaucracy means that there are fewer rules and written communications. This allows for greater flexibility of action and decisions can usually be made more quickly than is the case in large schools (e.g. student requests for social functions, teachers' special projects).

Shapiro (1958) found that there were fewer problems with group cooperation and that this led to greater confidence among teachers. This feeling by the staff also contributes to a more consistent enforcement of school rules and thus fewer problems for the administration.

Another asset of small schools is that more teachers are able to get involved in the administrative side of the school (Holdaway 1972). The small numbers permit a principal to get input from the faculty when decisions on school policy are to be made. In short, it is possible for individuals to make a greater impact on the contribution to the school than would be the case in a large high school.

The Teacher

One would have to say that the single most important strength of

small high schools is the presence of a strong human-relations dimension. As a general rule, classes tend to be smaller in these schools, especially in the senior grades. While this means a lighter marking load, the major benefit is that the teacher gets to know students better and is able to provide more individual attention. It also becomes possible to conduct courses in a manner that better meets the needs of the students. This means the teacher can be more successful and thus gain greater satisfaction.

In a small school teachers are often able to teach in one or more subject areas. This is a great boon to those who feel restricted teaching the same subject to the same grade level three or four times in one day. The variety gives a broader scope and awareness of developments in other disciplines.

As noted in the section on administration, teachers are able to be more involved in the administrative affairs of the school, thus deriving greater personal fulfillment from the evidence that they are important in the running of the school. It has also been noted (Turner and Thrasher, 1970) that this results in teachers in small high schools being more receptive to supervision and change than are their counterparts in large schools.

In the small schools, teachers know one another better and are better able to help one another. It is easier for them to discuss problems, corrdinate activities among themselves, and meet socially as a community. There is not the same degree of cliquishness or departmental grouping as is found in big schools. Professionally it is easier to identify the ineffective teacher and to provide him or her with the assistance needed (Schoenholtz 1972). This is of particular benefit to the new teacher who is able to get support from his or her colleagues.

The Student

Most educators would agree that there is much more to education than the acquisition of knowledge. The majority of teachers hope that they are developing students as complete persons. One of the more important ways in which schools contribute to the development of young people is through their participation in extra-curricular activities. Research indicates that small high schools, in many cases, have extra-curricular offerings similar to those of large high schools. But in the latter, competition for positions on teams and clubs is such that only the best participate. Barker and Gump (1964) found that students in small high schools, on the average, participate in several times as many activities as do students in large schools. More specific studies (Wicker 1969) found that more juniors in small secondary schools had significantly more positions of responsibility than juniors in large schools. Their levels of satisfaction were also much greater than were those of students in large schools (Barker and Gump).

There is much research to support the higher involvement in small

high schools, but what does this mean for the student? The high-school years are a time when young people are learning a great deal about themselves and their relationship with others. Because of the greater involvement in school life, students often have greater confidence and self-esteem (Schoenholtz 1972; Small School Study Committee 1974). Turner and Thrasher (1970) found that students in small high schools exhibit greater responsibility for self-direction than do those in large schools. In the same study they noted that students in small schools had significantly higher cognitive-complexity scores than did students in large schools. Taken collectively, these studies indicate that the student from the small schools is likely to have a greater opportunity to be involved than his or her counterpart in large schools and to benefit from this participation by way of improved mental and social skills.

The Community

Recent studies in education and other areas are indicating the importance of the community to a school and vice-versa. It has been found that parents of students in small high schools tend to be more aware of and involved in school life than are parents of students in large secondary schools (Small School Study Committee 1974). They tend to support the school more by participating in parents' nights, social functions, and other activities. This is particularly the case if they went to the schools themselves. Communication between the school and parents also tends to be better and one finds that teachers will get to know more parents and to know them better.

An importance benefit for many is that the time students have to spend riding buses back and forth to school is reduced in the case of small high schools (Clements 1970). This helps retain the sense of community.

Guidance

As Roberts (1971) notes, the guidance department of large high schools has become the repository of all the problems of staff/student relationships. With increased school size, it is often the case that a guidance teacher never sees a student in a classroom context. In the small high schools this type of departmentalization is not as likely and guidance becomes the responsibility of all staff members. The student is thus permitted to select a teacher that he or she feels he or she can talk to rather than being directed to an individual with this specific responsibility. This means that both teacher and student know each other better and therefore the quality of guidance will be improved (Clements 1970; Schoenholtz 1972).

Guidance is not just the discussion of future plans and the solving of personal and academic problems; it is larger than this. Students learn a great deal by example from contact with adults and in particular with teachers. Both Roberts and Clements believe that student unrest can be attributed, in part, to large schools. In these schools there is greater potential for the individual to be

involved in a huge peer group of poorly supervised adolescents who know little of life through experience and who listen to no one but themselves or are the victimes of group pressure (Clements 1970). Both also suggest that the extra guidance needed by students from teachers and parents can be provided more readily in the small high school.

Atmosphere

Atmosphere is an intangible thing and very difficult to describe. It involves feelings, spirit, attitude, and many other dimensions, which although very real, are hard to measure and evaluate.

Morale often tends to be better in small high schools (Clements 1970). There is much greater human contact (Roberts 1971) which reduces the frustration of not being able to participate and be involved. All students and teachers are important and missed if they do not carry their load (Barker and Gump 1964). In competition with other schools, because students know one another, there is greater loyalty and school spirit. If the school has existed for some time, there are often traditions and a sense of pride which strengthen cohesiveness and identification with the school. These feelings permeate both staff and students. In large schools these types of ties are much weaker and weaken as the size increases (Turner and Thrasher, 1970).

In a large school it is possible for a person with problems to be ignored because of the large numbers. In the small school where communication is better and people know one another better, it is possible to meet the emotional and psychological needs of students more fully (Schoenholtz 1972). Knowledge of the community and family background helps facilitate this.

Small high schools usually have fewer and less serious discipline problems. In a setting where most students are known by name to the teachers (and to one another) the risk of being identified for some misdeed is much greater; increased surveillance yields increased social control.

Weaknesses of Small Secondary Schools

This section of the paper will discuss the weaknesses of small high schools in six areas: finances, curriculum, student achievement, staffing, morale, and cultural opportunities. These categories are often interrelated. This is a continuum, with the weaknesses being most pronounced in the very small schools (enrollment under 200) and disappearing as the size approaches the 700-student level.

Finances

Although the lack of funds is a problem facing many schools today, it is of particular concern to the small secondary school. Many writers (Conant 1959; Clements 1970; Turner and Thrasher 1970) agree that schools with less than 200 students have higher per-pupil costs than do larger schools. However, two points should

be noted in this connection. First, some researchers base their calculations only on pupil/teacher ratios, showing a significant cost difference between large and small schools. This can be misleading, because nonteaching personnel are not counted. When these are included in determining costs, the gap between large and small schools is greatly reduced (Clements 1970). Second, if a school becomes very big (about 2,000) a point is reached where costs begin to increase again. The optimum size of a secondary school from the standpoint of cost is considered to be in the 800- to 1,200-student range (Smith 1961).

As one would expect, small schools are not always equipped with the same type of facilities one finds in large schools. Stutz (1965) and Edington and Musselman (1969) point out that special areas such as libraries, laboratories, gymnasia, and office space are sometimes inadequate or serve purposes for which they were not intended.

The lack of money often means that support services such as cafeterias or counseling cannot be provided (Templeton 1972). In addition students with special problems cannot be catered to and their needs go unattended or the student has to go to some other institution for assistance.

Curriculum

Another major criticism of small secondary schools is that the scope and depth of their course offerings are limited (Conant 1959; Dickson 1964; Schoenholtz 1972; Ross 1972). This means that students have little choice in selecting their program and may be required to take courses in which they have little interest. This is particularly true at the senior vocational level where a school is not able or prepared to spend money on special equipment in areas such as Home Economics and Industrial Arts (Dickson 1964). Because of this weakness one finds that many small high schools tend to be academically oriented.

There is often an absence of special programs for both the gifted and the slow learner because of the cost and the limited numbers involved. There is also a tendency for teacher to concentrate their efforts and their courses in a manner that is of greatest benefit to those who are trying to go to university (Swanson 1970).

Two other problems small high schools may face are the difficulties in changing courses and providing new ones to meet the needs of students and the society in which they live (Committee on Small Schools 1974), and the problems facing the stuents who has to transfer from a large school to a small one. Adjusting to a new environment is made more difficult by the problem of finding a suitable program, when offerings are limited. But transfers are more frequent in the other direction, from small to large schools, and this too can pose problems for students.

Student Achievement

A charge often levelled at small secondary schools is that their students perform less well academically than do pupils at large schools (Conant 1959; Keisling 1968; Minnesota Public School Survey Committee 1969). However, this issue is not clear cut. There are a number of researchers who have found that size makes little difference. At least one study found that there was no significant difference on scores obtained by first-year university students coming from schools of varying sizes (Gray 1962). When other variables are introduced in the school-size/student-achievement controversy, such as father's occupation, family attitudes, and socioeconomic index, the correlation between these two variables becomes negative (Clements 1970; Templeton 1972).

Staffing

One of the greatest difficulties facing small schools has traditionally been acquiring qualified teachers. Turnover in small high schools has tended to be higher than in large schools because they are often located in rural and/or isolated areas (Templeton 1972). In the last few years this problem has eased considerably as more teachers become available and urban areas have become less attractive. Nevertheless there could be a problem for small schools should another teacher shortage occur.

Although teachers at a small secondary school enjoy a much closer relationship with another and with their students than is the case in large schools (Clements 1970), they do face some handicaps. Professional areas may be limited where the staff is small. This may be of particular concern to a new teacher who has not had previous experience in handling a particular problem. It also happens that teachers will be asked to teach in a subject area in which they have little competence or experience (Committee on Small Schools 1974). Closely related to this point is the fact that specialists may not be able to use their expertise as fully as they would in larger schools (Dickson 1964).

The small number of students often means that a particular course will be taught only once a day. This requires a teacher to prepare for more classes than is the case for a teacher at a large school, who can repeat a lesson one or more times.

Morale

Morale can be a problem in any school, whether big or small. In the minds of many in our society, there is often the equation of big equals better. This attitude sometimes gives those at a small school the feeling that they are inferior (Committee on Small Schools 1974). The administration in a small school has great influence and if this notion is present at that level it is very difficult to overcome.

Morale can suffer as a result of inter-school extra-curricular competition. A large school is able to select the best students to participate in competitive activities. The small school often has

to take all comers to form a team or club. This usually means that the smaller school is not as successful and may develop a defeatist attitude.

The community plays an important role in many small high schools. If their influence becomes overbearing it can adversely affect the administration, teachers, and students to the detriment of all (Committee on Small Schools 1972).

In a small school everyone knows everyone else and takes an interest in them. This can become a weakness because there are times when one wishes and needs anonymity. This can be hard to achieve at a small school for both students and teachers. Some teachers feel that they are not as free to socialize as they would be in a city because they encounter students and parents. There are times when students need to be on their own. When this desire to be free from others is frustrated it can weaken a school's morale.

Cultural Opportunities

Students at small high schools tend to be homogeneous groupings and therefore have little contact with others from a different background and culture (Committee on Small Schools 1974). This is not as serious a problem for schools in urban areas but if the school is rural and/or isolated there is a definite potential for cultural impoverishment and a lack of the broadening that contact with "different others" provides.

Promising Practices

Most efforts to change educational practices, either in larger or smaller schools have tended in the past to emphasize what should be changed, rather than how change might best occur. Recent experience in bringing about change in organizations, be they educational or others, has tended to indicate that the process or change strategy, is more important than the identification of product, or change desired. Both have their place in planning for change, and we will give attention to them.

An exhaustive review of the literautre on the process of educational change was conducted by Michael Fullan in 1972. His conclusions about recent educational change efforts were summarized by Stutz (1974) into twelve characteristics of the "Model Innovative Process." The emphasis of this model is on externally developed programs being transplanted

into schools through administrative pressure, with little input from local teachers, parents, or students. Most of the educational change efforts of the 1960's generally followed this model, and it was finally recognized that those efforts were largely fruitless. At best, adoption of the innovation became an end in itself, and little attention was given to whether the innovation actually improved teaching and learning.

Educational leaders recognized the need for a new strategy for educational change. The following assumptions were generally accepted as basic to such a strategy:

1. School improvements are longer lasting and more effective if those affected take part in the decision making process;
2. a comprehensive plan produces enduring improvements;
3. improvement of community communication, problem solving, and decision making skills increased the likelihood of positive action, local leadership, and group motivation;
4. a "process" person (outside consultant) facilitates group work and enhances the potential for reaching goals;
5. group projection of a desirable future is a better first step than identification of problems and concerns; and
6. consultative assistance is more positive when it builds independence, rather than dependence (Jongeward, 1975).

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory took these kinds of assumptions and developed the Rural Futures Development Process, as a part of the Rural Education Program (REP), for use in promoting change in rural schools. Stutz (1974) developed a chart contrasting the characteristics of the Model Innovative Process and those of the Rural Futures Development Process. As shown in the following chart, the differences are dramatic and far-reaching.

NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY
RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
ROWAN C. STUTZ, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MODEL INNOVATIVE PROCESS: (as identified by Michael Fullan, 1972 and reported by Statz (1974))	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RURAL FUTURES DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:
1. Innovations are developed externally and transmitted to schools on a relatively universal basis.	1. Learners, parents, and teachers have enough understanding of curriculum design, organizational development and instructional methods that they can make wise choices regarding the creative development of new programs, utilizing components of wide variety of alternatives.
2. Users of innovations (parents, teachers, students) have had limited roles in the educational change process, and generally are seen as passive adopters of the best of recent innovations.	2. Users (citizens, educators, students) are in control of the innovative process in their own schools and participate in selecting and/or creating the innovations to be used in working out the implementation problems.
3. Primacy is given to innovations which often become the ends of the change process rather than the means for achieving desired outcomes.	3. Primacy is given to outcomes and user capacities to innovate. Innovations are viewed as means to accomplishing desired outcomes.
4. Change is initiated from the outside and schools are viewed as a part of the universe of adopters.	4. Schools and their communities are viewed as initiators of change and as selective, creative, deliberative users of the products of research and development.
5. Educational reforms are often individualistic as a result of permissive process.	5. Educational reforms are pervasive--a result of participative process.
6. Values and goals as articulated by the users have no direct influence in the process.	6. Users' values and goals provide much of the input to the process and directly influence decisions made about innovating.

7. Diversity of innovations is not allowed.	7. RFD assumes wide diversity in goals and legitimizes diversity of alternatives. It recognizes that different communities and schools may have different objectives and priorities at any given point in time.
8. The force of the innovative process is from the top down.	8. The force of the innovative process is from the bottom up. The role of of the top-down relationship is to facilitate the bottom-up innovative process.
9. Role changes in user systems, which are theoretically part and parcel of intended consequences of most educational innovations, are not recognized and planned for.	9. Changes in roles and role relationships are part and parcel of the implementation process.
10. Little awareness exists that innovations require unlearning and relearning, and create uncertainty and a concern about competencies to perform new roles.	10. RFD recognizes that virtually every significant change has implications for changes in roles and role relationships. These changes, and the opportunity resources and atmosphere for acquiring needed new competencies, are integral components of the implementation process.
11. New educational ideas and organizational changes often, through lack of user involvement, become empty alternatives because they create unrealistic conditions and expectations for teacher, administrator, parent and/or student performance.	11. Users participate in deciding what changes are to be made and in deciding what is needed to successfully implement them. Thus, new performance expectations are more likely to be realistic and planned changes are more likely to occur.
12. Those affected by the change are dependent upon the process.	12. Use of the process is dependent upon those affected by the changes.

Some additional suggestions are made by Jongward (1975) on specific things to keep in mind when implementing a program such as the Rural Futures Development Process. They include the following:

1. Help members of your school-community begin to consider what they would view as a "desirable future."

   If possible, find a third party outside the community who is qualified to help you do this.

2. Try to involve the entire community--students (especially from junior high and senior high) and staff, custodians, secretaries, bus drivers, aides, community people--so that all voices can be heard.

3. Organize a broadly representative "mix" of these people to form a School-Community Group.

   This group must be sponsored by the school board but should act as an independent body (a third party problems solving group) that makes carefully prepared recommendations to the Board. Encourage and support this group.

4. When the group is established, ask them to examine the goals of their "desirable future" and determine which have priority.

   Then, ask them to list the barriers that prevent your school-community from reaching the goals they've listed as priorities.

5. Next, the group must examine available alternatives that can help them remove these barriers.

   Get them to identify what things are most important. Involve the whole community if possible. Responsive agencies are most helpful at this point of the search.

6. When one or more alternatives have been selected, the group should make a written recommendation to the board explaining their thinking and their conclusions up to this point.

7. Members of the board/administration study the report, accept or modify it as needed, and ask the group to develop final plans for initiating the recommendation.

   Involving the community group in implementation of the plan maintains their identification with and support of it. As school board members, share with them the responsibility for making it work!

8. In compliance with the board request, the group should develop a plan for implementing the recommendation, and bring it back to the board for final approval.

   It is especially helpful if the group includes in their plan indicators (criteria) that can be used to assess the relative success of the newly installed program/ project.

9. The School-Community Group helps install the new program, monitors it, and, after a few months, assesses the progress it has made.

   It is tempting at this point to let the professionals take over. Keeping the community group participating, however, builds confidence and support.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has developed materials for the Rural Education Program under a comprehensive plan called School Community Process--formerly the Rural Futures Development Strategy (RFD).

The RFD products include (Jongeward, 1975):

1. A Notebook for School-Community groups
2. A Guide for School Board Development
3. A Guide for Schools
4. Strategy Descriptions
5. Process Facilitator Manuals
6. A Guide for Training Process Facilitators
7. Support Agency Materials

In 1975, the Lab reported that these products were undergoing exploratory testing in Utah. Further dissemination of the materials was expected.

Another promising project is the federally funded Experimental Schools Project in Small Schools. This project was initiated in 1972 when the United States Office of Education extended to small, rural districts its Experimental School Program to test the validity of lasting improvements

through internal comprehensive change rather than piecemeal innovative elements. Three hundred and twenty school districts applied for funding, with ten districts being selected for participation. Abt Associates was chosen as the independent research organization to document and evaluate the project (Abt Ass., 1975). The Experimental Schools Project was developed to place an emphasis on involvement of the total school system, and each district was asked to develop a proposal that included three major sections:

1. What did they want for their students, their schools, and their communities?
2. What plans did they have for achieving these goals? (to include curriculum; teacher training; parents and citizen participation; use of time, space, and facilities; and organization, administrative, and governance adjustments)
3. What plans did they have for self-evaluation during the life of the project? (Abt Associates, 1975).

In assessing the ten districts' proposals several factors are noteworthy. All ten districts wanted their students to be better prepared for life--in the hometown or elsewhere. Some of the specific practices directed at achieving this included:

a. Early educational programs to foster self-confidence.
b. Individualized curriculum to fit specific studies to individual goals.
c. Basic skills to prepare students for all opportunities.
d. Cultural enrichment programs to broaden students' scope and perception of life.
e. New programs to help students not experiencing educational success.

A second recurring theme was expansion of the learning process. This

meant a variety of things, including opening walls, exposing students to a larger environment, and utilizing the natural environment. A desire for change in eight broad areas was evident:

a. Outdoor education
b. Cultural enrichment programs
c. Basic skills
d. Counseling programs
e. Health and physical fitness
f. Early childhood and adult education
g. Diagnostic teaching methods
h. Career education--this was the strongest component of plans as way to more thoughtfully and more practically prepare students for competitive society (Abt Associates, 1975).

Full documentation of this study will be available in 1979. It will bear careful study for those concerned with preparing for the eighties.

No survey of promising education practices in secondary schools would be complete without discussion of the Model Schools Program conceptualized by J. Lloyd Trump and his colleagues. There are seven basic concepts of secondary educational needs by students and teachers that underlie the program (NASSP Bulletin, 1977):

a. Interdisciplinary approach
b. Personalized learning
c. Continuous growth
d. Integrated and sequential program
e. Teaching concepts
f. Continual coordination and inservice
g. Teacher/Advisor counseling

The Model Schools Program is built on four specific premises, each of which is amplified in a particular book. The four premises with the title of corresponding books are:

a. Responsibility for change lies at the local level--this concept is included in all three of the following books;

b. A prescribed, specific model to follow--School for Everyone

c. Emphasis on evaluation--How Good is Your School

d. Study of the process of change--How to Change Your School

Although the Model Schools Program is not primarily for small and rural schools, there are some specific charts and suggestions as to how it could be used in those circumstances.

There are several clusters of educational innovations that appear notable either for their quantity or their quality. They will be presented in categorical form.

Of the eight major target areas for change in the Experimental Schools Project, career education was a strong priority (Abt Ass.,: 1973). This concern is reiterated in the literature. There are over twenty publications or reports related to career or vocational education in rural or small schools published in the ERIC system since the late 1960's.

Another prime area of development appears to be related to the concept of individualized instruction. Several models are being developed as a way to diversify curriculum according to student needs in a small school setting. Regional cooperatives and innovative scheduling techniques seem to also deserve attention to meet the challenge of ruralness.

Several additional isolated topics aimed at curriculum improvements are found in the literature. Among these are:

a. use of the daily newspaper to teach current events;

b. a teacher exchange program to demonstrate good teaching practice;

c. use of audio and video equipment to enlarge on classroom experiences;

d. use of mobile facilities for the delivery of instructional services to rural children.

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